

## CHAPTER 26

### *Al-Shu‘arâ’: The Poets*

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 11 *sections*; 227 *verses*)

The title of this chapter, *The Poets*, is taken from a reference to the poets in verse 224, where arguments are given that the Arabic Glorious Qur’ân is not the work of a poet. In fact, the whole chapter deals with this oft-repeated allegation of the opponents by showing that the Holy Prophet’s work and preaching were similar in detail to the work and preaching of preceding prophets, bearing no resemblance whatever to the work of poets. While the prophets spoken of here are identical with those in the 7th chapter, where they are mentioned chronologically, their order in this chapter is different, Mûsâ coming first, the object being to draw attention to a repetition of the history of Mûsâ in the history of the Prophet. In the opening section of the chapter the Holy Prophet is given consolation, and told not to grieve too much on account of the disbelief of the people, nor yet to despair of their reformation. The history of Mûsâ is taken up in the next three sections from the time of his message to Pharaoh to that of Pharaoh’s drowning, together with his hosts, in the Red Sea. The fifth section takes us back to Ibrâhîm, because that patriarch gives us the connecting link between the houses of Isrâ’îl and Ismâ’îl, or between the two great prophets, Mûsâ and Muḥammad. The next five sections are devoted to the narratives of Nûḥ, Hûd, Sâlih, Lûṭ, and Shu‘aib in chronological order; the fate of the opponents of each of these prophets being, as it were, a warning to the opponents of the Holy Prophet; and this is clearly indicated in the concluding section of the chapter.

The three chapters, 26th, 27th and 28th, form a group, not only connected in subject, but also belonging to the same period, and may be called the *Tâ sîn mîm* group. All three belong to the middle Makkan period. The chief point in each is the story of Mûsâ, with which they all begin, although the 27th chapter makes only a brief reference to it. In each case that story begins with Mûsâ being called to prophethood at Mount Sinai with a special message for Pharaoh, ending with Pharaoh being drowned in the Red Sea: the later wanderings of the Isrâ’îlites are not referred to in any of them. This common thread of the narrative in all three chapters gives us a clue to the subject-matter and to their connection with what has gone before. The 25th chapter

speaks of the *Furqân*, or the great distinctive sign that was given to the Holy Prophet, and these three chapters really supply the *furqân* or distinctive sign given to Mûsâ, which, as shown in 2:53a, was the drowning of the Egyptians in the Red Sea; hence the narrative is in all cases brought to an end with that incident.

## SECTION 1: The Prophet is consoled

In the name of Allâh, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

### 1 *Tâ sîn mîm*

2 These are the verses of the Book that makes manifest.<sup>a</sup>

3 Perhaps you will kill yourself with grief because they believe not.<sup>a</sup>

4 If We please, We could send down on them a sign from the *samâ'*, so that their necks would bend before it.<sup>a</sup>

5 And there comes not to them a new Reminder from the Beneficent but they turn away from it.

6 They indeed reject, so the news will soon come to them of that at which they mock.<sup>a</sup>

7 See they not the earth, how many of every noble kind We cause to grow in it?

2a. The Arabic Glorious Qur'ân *makes manifest all that is needed* for a right development of the human faculties, and it also makes manifest the whole truth.

3a. The Prophet was informed by Divine revelation of the doom of an evil generation, but instead of cursing it, he exerted himself heroically to save his people by bringing about a mighty transformation among them, a transformation for which he was so anxious that he is described here as almost killing himself with grief.

4a. Such a sign was sent in the battle of Badr and again in the conquest of Makkah. In the former place their chiefs were laid low, and in the latter they accepted submission.

6a. It was the prophecies of their own vanquishment and of the predominance of Islâm at which they mocked.

8 Surely in this is a sign; yet most of them believe not.

9 And surely your *Rabb* is the Mighty, the Merciful.<sup>a</sup>

## SECTION 2: Mûsâ is called and sent to Pharaoh

**10** And when your *Rabb* called Mûsâ, saying: Go to the iniquitous people —  
**11** The people of Pharaoh. Will they not guard against evil?  
**12** He said: My *Rabb*, I fear that they will reject me.  
**13** And my breast straitens, and my tongue is not eloquent,<sup>a</sup> so send for Hârûn (too).  
**14** And they have a crime against me, so I fear that they will kill me.<sup>a</sup>  
**15** He said: By no means; so go you both with Our signs; surely We are with you, Hearing.  
**16** Then come to Pharaoh, and say: We are bearers of a message of the *Rabb* of the worlds:  
**17** Send with us the Children of Isrâ'îl.

**9a.** Seven prophets in all are spoken of in this chapter, and it is related how the enemies of every one of them were exterminated in the final triumph of the Truth. Yet to give an indication of the fate of the Prophet's opponents each prophet's mention is ended with the two attributes of the Divine Being mentioned here, the *Mighty*, the *Merciful*, the first of these indicating that Truth will, even now, be made to overcome all opposition and the second that the dealing with the opponents of the Prophet would be a merciful dealing. The Prophet's opponents were vanquished indeed but they were not destroyed and a reformed people rose again to power.

**13a.** In 20:27 Mûsâ prays to Allâh: *And loose the knot from my tongue*. Here the same idea is expressed by the words: *And my tongue is not eloquent*; see 20:27a.

**14a.** The reference is to the killing of the Egyptian, as mentioned in 28:15. It is stated here that the people of Pharaoh charged Mûsâ with a crime, not that he was actually guilty; see 20a and 28:15a.

**18** (Pharaoh) said: Did we not bring you up as a child among us, and you did tarry (many) years of your life among us?

**19** And you did (that) deed of yours which you did and you are of the ungrateful ones.

**20** He said: I did it then when I was of those who err.<sup>a</sup>

**21** So I fled from you when I feared you, then my *Rabb* granted me judgment and made me of the messengers.

**22** And is it a favour of which you remind me that you have enslaved the Children of Isrâ'îl?<sup>a</sup>

**23** Pharaoh said: And what is the *Rabb* of the worlds?  
**24** He said: The *Rabb* of the *samâwât* and the earth and what is between them, if you would be sure.  
**25** (Pharaoh) said to those around him: Do you not hear?  
**26** He said: ‘Your *Rabb* and the *Rabb* of your fathers of old’.  
**27** (Pharaoh) said: Surely your messenger, who is sent to you, is mad.  
**28** He said: The *Rabb* of the East and the West and what is between them, if you have any sense.

**20a.** The circumstances in which Mûsâ’s act of striking an Egyptian with his fist led to the death of the Egyptian are related in 28:15. There was no intention to kill the man, nor did Mûsâ use any weapon with which death could be caused. *Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî explains *dâll* here as meaning *one perplexed; being unable to know what was incumbent on him*. He used his fist against the oppressor, and death was simply accidental.

**22a.** The Isrâ’îlites were employed only in menial work by Pharaoh and the Egyptians; it is this subjection to hardship which is here called *enslavement*.

**29** (Pharaoh) said: If you take a deity besides me, I will certainly put you in prison.<sup>a</sup>  
**30** He said: Even if I show you something plain?  
**31** (Pharaoh) said: Show it, then, if you are of the truthful.  
**32** So he cast down his rod, and lo! It was an obvious serpent;  
**33** And he drew forth his hand, and lo! It appeared white to the beholders.<sup>a</sup>

### SECTION 3: Mûsâ and the Enchanters

**34** (Pharaoh) said to the chiefs around him: Surely this is a skilful enchanter,  
**35** Who desires to turn you out of your land with his enchantment - What is it then that you counsel?  
**36** They said: Give him and his brother respite and send heralds into the cities  
**37** That they bring to you every skilful enchanter.  
**38** So the enchanters were gathered together for the appointment of a well-known day,  
**39** And it was said to the people: Will you gather together?

**29a.** The deities of the Egyptians were innumerable. There were the abstract deities, the cosmic deities, the human deities, and the animal deities. Their deity-cult may be summed up briefly in the words of the Encyclopaedia Britannica (volume ix, page 51): “Truly it might have been said in ancient Egypt, of the making of gods there is no end”. Pharaoh’s claim to divinity among a people who were willing to deify anything has therefore nothing strange about it.

**33a.** See 7:108a; 20:20a, 22a.

**40** Haply we may follow the enchanters, if they are the vanquishers.

**41** So when the enchanters came, they said to Pharaoh: Will there be a reward for us, if we are the vanquishers?

**42** He said: Yes, and surely you will then be of those who are nearest (to me).

**43** Mûsâ said to them: Cast what you are going to cast.

**44** So they cast down their cords and their rods and said: By Pharaoh’s power we shall most surely be victorious.

**45** Then Mûsâ cast down his rod, and lo! It swallowed up their fabrication.

**46** And the enchanters were thrown down prostrate —

**47** They said: We believe in the *Rabb* of the worlds,

**48** The *Rabb* of Mûsâ and Hârûn.

**49** (Pharaoh) said: You believe in him before I give you leave; surely he is the chief of you who taught you enchantment, so you shall know.

Certainly I will cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides, and I will crucify you all.

**50** They said: No harm; surely to our *Rabb* we return.

**51** We hope that our *Rabb* will forgive us our wrongs because we are the first of the believers.

#### **SECTION 4: Mûsâ is delivered and Pharaoh drowned**

**52** And We revealed to Mûsâ, saying: Travel by night with My servants — you will be pursued.

**53** And Pharaoh sent heralds into the cities (proclaiming):

**54** These are indeed a small band,

**55** And they have surely enraged us:

**56** And we are truly a vigilant multitude.  
**57** So We turned them out of gardens and springs,  
**58** And treasures and goodly dwellings —  
**59** Even so. And We gave them as a heritage to the Children of Isrâ'îl.<sup>a</sup>  
**60** Then they pursued them at sunrise.  
**61** So when the two hosts saw each other, the companions of Mûsâ cried out: Surely we are overtaken.  
**62** He said: By no means; surely my *Rabb* is with me — He will guide me.  
**63** Then We revealed to Mûsâ: March on to the sea with your staff.<sup>a</sup> So it parted, and each party was like a huge mound.<sup>b</sup>

**59a.** The pronoun *them* refers to gardens and springs, etc., in general, and not to the particular gardens, etc., from which the Egyptians were turned out. The heritage of gardens and treasures was given to the Isrâ'îlites in the land of Canaan, the Promised Land flowing with milk and honey.

**63a.** The words *idrib bi- 'aṣâ-ka-l-bahra* are on all fours with the words *idrib bi- 'aṣâ-ka-l-hajara* occurring in 2:60; see 2:60a. Elsewhere the same idea is expressed by saying: “Strike for them a dry path in the sea, not fearing to be overtaken, nor being afraid” (20:77); see 20:77a, 2:50a.

**63b.** The sea had gone back, thus leaving a *dry path* (20:77) for the Isrâ'îlites. The meaning may be that each wave, as it receded, was like a huge mound. The word *taud*, it may be noted, means a *mountain*, as well as an *elevated* or *overlooking tract of land* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane), and is even applied by a poet to a *camel's hump* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane).

**64** And there We brought near the others.  
**65** And We saved Mûsâ and those with him, all.  
**66** Then We drowned the others.  
**67** Surely there is a sign in this; yet most of them believe not.  
**68** And surely your *Rabb* is the Mighty, the Merciful.

## SECTION 5: History of Ibrâhîm

**69** And recite to them the story of Ibrâhîm.

70 When he said to his sire and his people: What do you worship?  
 71 They said: We worship idols, so we shall remain devoted to them.  
 72 He said: Do they hear you when you call (on them),  
 73 Or do they benefit or harm you?  
 74 They said: Nay, we found our fathers doing so.  
 75 He said: Do you then see what you worship—  
 76 You and your ancient sires?  
 77 Surely they are an enemy to me, but not (so) the *Rabb* of the worlds,  
 78 Who created me, then He shows me the way,  
 79 And Who gives me to eat and to drink,  
 80 And when I am sick, He heals me,  
 81 And Who will cause me to die, then give me life,  
 82 And Who, I hope, will forgive me my mistakes on the day of Judgment.<sup>a</sup>  
 83 My *Rabb*, grant me wisdom, and join me with the righteous,  
 84 And ordain for me a goodly mention in later generations,  
 85 And make me of the heirs of the Garden of bliss,  
 86 And forgive my sire, surely he is of the erring ones,  
 87 And disgrace me not on the day when they are raised —  
 88 The day when wealth will not avail, nor sons,  
 89 Save him who comes to Allâh with a sound heart.  
 90 And the Garden is brought near for the dutiful,  
 91 And hell is made manifest to the deviators,<sup>a</sup>  
 92 And it is said to them: Where are those that you worshipped  
 93 Besides Allâh? Can they help you or help themselves?  
 94 So they are hurled into it, they and the deviators,  
 95 And the hosts of the *Iblîs*, all.

82a. The prophets, being always conscious of their weakness, seek Allâh's protection. Expressions like this invariably indicate human weakness before Divine perfection, and are not evidence of sinfulness.

91a. The making manifest of hell shows that it already exists, but is hidden from the human eye, while on the day of Resurrection it will be made plain.

96 They will say, while they quarrel therein:

97 By Allâh! We were certainly in manifest error,  
98 When we made you equal with the *Rabb* of the worlds.  
99 And none but the guilty led us astray.  
100 So we have no intercessors,  
101 Nor a true friend.  
102 Now, if we could but once return, we would be believers.  
103 Surely there is a sign in this; yet most of them believe not.  
104 And surely your *Rabb* is the Mighty, the Merciful.

#### SECTION 6: **History of Nûh**

105 The people of Nûh rejected the messengers.  
106 When their brother Nûh said to them: Will you not guard against evil?  
107 Surely I am a faithful messenger to you:  
108 So keep your duty to Allâh and obey me.  
109 And I ask of you no reward for it: my reward is only with the Rabb of the worlds.  
110 So keep your duty to Allâh and obey me.  
111 They said: Shall we believe in you and the meanest follow you?  
112 He said: And what knowledge have I of what they did?  
113 Their reckoning is only with my *Rabb*, if you but perceive.  
114 And I am not going to drive away the believers;  
115 I am only a plain warner.  
116 They said: If you desist not, O Nûh, you wilt certainly be stoned to death.  
117 He said: My *Rabb*, my people give me the lie.  
118 So judge You between me and them openly, and deliver me and the believers who are with me.  
119 So We delivered him and those with him in the laden ark.  
120 Then We drowned the rest afterwards.<sup>a</sup>  
121 Surely there is a sign in this, yet most of them believe not.  
122 And surely your *Rabb* is the Mighty, the Merciful.

#### SECTION 7: **History of Hûd**

123 ‘Âd gave the lie to the messengers.



**124** When their brother Hûd said to them: Will you not guard against evil?

**125** Surely I am a faithful messenger to you:

**126** So keep your duty to Allâh and obey me.

**120a.** Wherever Nûh is mentioned, only such of his people are spoken of as having been drowned as rejected and persecuted him; see also 11:42a.

**127** And I ask of you no reward for it; surely my reward is only with the *Rabb* of the worlds.

**128** Do you build on every height a monument? You (only) sport.<sup>a</sup>

**129** And you make fortresses that you may abide.

**130** And when you seize, you seize as tyrants.

**131** So keep your duty to Allâh and obey me.

**132** And keep your duty to Him Who aids you with that which you know —

**133** He aids you with cattle and children

**134** And gardens and fountains.

**135** Surely I fear for you the chastisement of a grievous day.

**136** They said: It is the same to us whether you admonish, or are not one of the admonishers:

**137** This is naught but a fabrication of the ancients:<sup>a</sup>

**138** And we will not be chastised.

**139** So they rejected him, then We destroyed them. Surely there is a sign in this; yet most of them believe not.

**140** And surely your *Rabb* is the Mighty, the Merciful.

**128a.** The word *âyat*, literally a *sign*, is used here to indicate the *lofty building that should acquire renown as a sign of greatness*; see 2:39a. These lofty buildings were, no doubt, used to terrorize others, as verse 130 show that acts of cruelty and violence were committed by ‘Âd, while they considered themselves safe in their fortresses.

**137a.** The word *khuluq* sometimes carries the same significance as the word *ikhṭilâq*, i.e., a *fabrication*.

## SECTION 8: History of Sâlih

**141** Thamûd gave the lie to the messengers.  
**142** When their brother Sâlih said to them: Will you not guard against evil?  
**143** Surely I am a faithful messenger to you:  
**144** So keep your duty to Allâh and obey me.  
**145** And I ask of you no reward for it; my reward is only with the *Rabb* of the worlds.  
**146** Will you be left secure in what is here,  
**147** In gardens and fountains,  
**148** And corn-fields and palm-trees having fine flower-spikes?  
**149** And you hew houses out of the mountains exultingly.  
**150** So keep your duty to Allâh and obey me.  
**151** And obey not the bidding of the extravagant,  
**152** Who make mischief in the land and act not aright.  
**153** They said: You are only a deluded person.  
**154** You are naught but a mortal like ourselves — so bring a sign if you are truthful.  
**155** He said: This is a she-camel; she has her portion of water, and you have your portion of water at an appointed time.<sup>a</sup>  
**156** And touch her not with evil, lest the chastisement of a grievous day overtake you.  
**157** But they hamstrung her, then regretted,  
**158** So the chastisement overtook them. Surely there is a sign in this; yet most of them believe not.  
**159** And surely your *Rabb* is the Mighty, the Merciful.

## SECTION 9: History of Lût

**160** The people of Lût gave the lie to the messengers.  
**161** When their brother Lût said to them: Will you not guard against evil?  
**162** Surely I am a faithful messenger to you:  
**163** So keep your duty to Allâh and obey me.  
**164** And I ask of you no reward for it; my reward is only with the *Rabb* of the worlds.  
**165** Do you come to the males from among the creatures,

**155a.** See 7:73a for Thamûd. They are described in verse 149 as hewing houses out of the mountains, and, as it appears from here and 54:28, the springs of water seem to have been few, and access to these was probably specially guarded, so that they were

open only at particular times. For the she-camel, see 7:73c. Sâlih seems to have demanded that the she-camel should be allowed to drink at such times. See 54:28, where it is stated that every share of the water will be attended by the she-camel, or that she will have access to water at all times when the others are allowed to drink. A similar demand as regards her pasture is contained in 11:64 in the words “Leave her to pasture on Allâh’s earth”, followed by the same words as those following this demand for drink: “And touch her not with evil”.

The word shirb signifies either *an act of drinking*, or *a share*, or *portion that falls to one’s lot, of water*, or *a watering place*, or *a time of drinking*. And in law it signified *the use of water for the watering of sown fields and of beasts* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane).

**166** And leave your wives whom your *Rabb* has created for you? Nay, you are a people exceeding limits.

**167** They said: If you desist not, O Lût, you will surely be banished.

**168** He said: Surely I abhor what you do.

**169** My *Rabb*, deliver me and my followers from what they do.

**170** So We delivered him and his followers all,

**171** Except an old woman, among those who remained behind.<sup>a</sup>

**172** Then We destroyed the others.

**173** And We rained on them a rain, and evil was the rain on those warned.<sup>a</sup>

**174** Surely there is a sign in this; yet most of them believe not.

**175** And surely your *Rabb* is the Mighty, the Merciful.

## SECTION 10: History of Shu‘aib

**176** The dwellers of the grove gave the lie to the messengers.<sup>a</sup>

**177** When Shu‘aib said to them: Will you not guard against evil?

**178** Surely I am a faithful messenger to you;

**179** So keep your duty to Allâh and obey me.

**171a.** See 7:80a for Lût. The old woman referred to here was Lût’s wife.

**173a.** See 7:84a. Stones were rained on them as the result of a volcanic eruption.

**176a.** They are the same as the people of Midian.

**180** And I ask of you no reward for it; my reward is only with the *Rabb* of the worlds.  
**181** Give full measure and be not of those who diminish.  
**182** And weigh with a true balance.  
**183** And wrong not people of their dues, and act not corruptly in the earth, making mischief.  
**184** And keep your duty to Him Who created you and the former generations.<sup>a</sup>  
**185** They said: You are only a deluded person,  
**186** And you are naught but a mortal like ourselves, and we deem you to be a liar.  
**187** So cause a portion of the *samâ'* to fall on us, if you are truthful.<sup>a</sup>  
**188** He said: My *Rabb* knows best what you do.<sup>a</sup>  
**189** But they rejected him, so the chastisement of the day of Covering overtook them. Surely it was the chastisement of a grievous day!<sup>a</sup>  
**190** Surely there is a sign in this; yet most of them believe not.  
**191** And surely your *Rabb* is the Mighty, the Merciful.

**184a.** The word *jibillat* ("generations") means *nature*, *quality*, or *property*. But it is also synonymous with *jibill*, and the lexicologists recognize the two words as conveying the same meaning, viz., *a great company of men*, or *nation*, or *people* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane).

**187a.** *Kisaf* means *a portion* (*Al-Mufradât fî Ḡharîb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by Shaiikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî), and *a portion of the heaven* signifies *a punishment from heaven*. According to *Jâmi' al-Bayân fî Tafsîr al-Qur'ân* (Commentary), by Al-Shaiikh Mu'în al-Dîn ibn Safî al-Dîn, *kisaf* means *punishment*.

**188a.** It should be noted that the demand for the threatened punishment is always met with expressions signifying that the matter rests in the hands of Allâh. Such statements are really equivalent to saying that the thing will certainly come to pass.

**189a.** *Zullah* signifies a *shade*, or a *covering*, and the day of punishment is called *the day of Covering* because it covered them with punishment.

## SECTION 11: Prophet's opponents warned

**192** And surely this is a revelation from the *Rabb* of the worlds.

**193** The Faithful Divine communication of revelation brought it,<sup>a</sup>  
**194** On your heart that you may be a warner,<sup>a</sup>  
**195** In plain Arabic language.  
**196** And surely the same is in the Scriptures of the ancients.<sup>a</sup>  
**197** Is it not a sign to them that the learned men of the Children of Isrâ'îl know it?  
**198** And if We had revealed it to any of the foreigners,  
**199** And he had read it to them, they would not have believed in it.<sup>a</sup>

**193a.** The Faithful Divine communication is called *Jibrîl*, which signifies the means with which the Divine revelation was conveyed to the Holy Prophet. The Prophet himself was known in Makkah as *al-Amîn* or the *Faithful one* before revelation came to him.

**194a.** This shows that there was no *being* which communicated or brought it to the Holy Prophet. In addition of the words '*on your heart*' is to indicate that the Prophet's heart, being the receptacle of the mighty revelation, was no doubt truly responsive to the great truths contained in it. The high morals and the broad humanitarian truths which the Qur'ân contains give us a true picture of the great mind. This is referred to in one of the earliest revelations: "And surely you have sublime morals" (68:4). The pithy but most beautiful statement of 'A'ishah, the Prophet's wife, than whom none was more familiar with the recipient of the Qur'ânic revelation, remains unsurpassed in depicting the character of the Holy Prophet. When asked about it she replied: *His character is the Qur'ân*. She thus intimated in brief words that all those wonderful pictures of moral sublimity drawn in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân were pictures of the noble mind to which the Qur'ân was revealed.

**196a.** The prophecies relating to the advent of the Prophet Muḥammad, as met with in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, are referred to very often in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân. The statement made here is, however, more comprehensive: *They are met with in all ancient scriptures*. See 3:81, where a covenant is spoken of as being made through all the prophets of the world with regard to the Prophet's advent; see 3:81a. There is a reference in the next verse to the learned men of the Children of Isrâ'îl in particular because the Jews and the Christians had long been in contact with the Arabs. Such references are of frequent occurrence in the early Makkan revelations, and there is not the least ground for the statement that because of the mention of the

learned men of the Children of Isrâ'îl, these verses must have been revealed at Madînah.

**199a.** Because prophecy plainly showed that the Arabs were to be the recipients of the revelation; see 'Îsâ. 42:11: "Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit". In the Old Testament, Kedar, the son of Ishmael, stands for the Arab nation. Hence earlier prophecy required that the final revelation should be granted to an Arab.

**200** Thus do We cause it to enter into the hearts of the guilty.<sup>a</sup>

**201** They will not believe in it till they see the painful chastisement:

**202** So it will come to them suddenly, while they perceive not;

**203** Then they will say: Shall we be respited?

**204** Do they still seek to hasten on Our chastisement?

**205** See you, if We let them enjoy themselves for years,

**206** Then that which they are promised comes to them —

**207** That which they were made to enjoy will not avail them?

**208** And We destroyed no town but it had (its) warners —

**209** To remind. And We are never unjust.

**210** And the *shayâtîn* have not brought it.

**211** And it behoves them not, nor have they the power to do (it).

**212** Surely they are far removed from hearing it.<sup>a</sup>

**213** So call not upon another deity with Allâh, lest you be of those who are chastised.

**200a.** The meaning is that the Qur'ân was made to enter into their hearts by reason of the convincing proof of its truth; but they rejected it, as the next verse shows.

**212a.** The argument here is similar to that advanced by "Jesus Christ" when he said: "And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself" (Matthew 12:26). The evil one cannot be the source of the Qur'ân, for the Qur'ân calls to righteousness. See also verses 221–223 and 223a.

**214** And warn thy nearest relations,<sup>a</sup>

**215** And lower thy wing to the believers who follow thee.

**216** But if they disobey thee, say: I am clear of what you do.

**217** And rely on the Mighty, the Merciful,<sup>a</sup>

218 Who see you when you stand up,  
219 And thy movements among those who prostrate themselves.  
220 Surely He is the Hearing, the Knowing.  
221 Shall I inform you upon whom the *shaiyâtîn* descend?  
222 They descend upon every lying, sinful one —  
223 They give ear, and most of them are liars.<sup>a</sup>  
224 And the poets — the deviators follow them.

**214a.** When this verse was revealed, the Holy Prophet, standing on Mount *Safâ*, invited every tribe by name, and when the representatives of all the tribes had gathered together — among those assembled being also the *Quraish* and that inveterate enemy of the Holy Prophet, *Abû Lahab* — the Holy Prophet thus addressed them: “Tell me, if I were to inform you that a great army in the valley lies in wait to make a raid upon you, would you believe me?” “Aye!” was the reply in one voice, “for we have never found anything but truth emanating from thy lips.” “Then,” said the Prophet, “know that I am a warner to you of an approaching punishment.” “May you perish,” cried out the ill-tempered *Abû Lahab*, “was it for this that thou didst call us together?” (*Bukhârî* 65: xxvi, 2).

**217a.** The Prophet is here told to rely on the Mighty, the Merciful, the very words that are repeated at the end of almost every section of this chapter, thus showing that the fate of the opponents of former prophets was spoken of simply to warn his own opponents. The attribute of *mightiness* is used to indicate the power to punish the wicked, while *mercy* indicates the deliverance and triumph of the righteous, or a merciful dealing even with the opponents.

**223a.** The subject of verse 212 is reverted to here, and it corroborates what is said in

**212a.** The opponents of the *Qur’ân* would not listen to what is said in the *Qur’ân* — they are far removed from hearing it, as stated in verse 212 — but they listen to what their leaders in evil say.

225 See you not that they wander in every valley,<sup>a</sup>

226 And that they say that which they do not?<sup>a</sup>

227 Except those who believe and do good and remember *Allâh* much, and defend themselves after they are oppressed.<sup>a</sup> And they who do wrong, will know to what final place of turning they will turn back.

**225a.** That is, they pursue an aimless course, while the Prophet has a set purpose before him, and it is to make men walk in the ways of righteousness.

**226a.** The first suggestion of the disbelievers was that the Qur'ân was the work of the shaitân. That being shown to be inconsistent with its very nature and with the righteousness it preached, they said that it was the work of a poet. As against this they are told that none of the characteristics of a poet's work are to be met with in the Qur'ân. The poet never leads his followers to a life of righteousness, while the Qur'ân was bringing about a pure transformation in the lives of those who followed it. Again, the poets say things which they do not practice, whereas the Prophet was not only a preacher of righteousness, but also an exemplar who translated into practice what he taught in words. And the weightiest consideration of all is that the poets cannot utter prophecies like those which are met with in the Qur'ân. It is to this that attention is called in the next verse.

**227a.** The passage gives a description of the true believers in general, a new statement being introduced with *illâ* (*except*); or it may refer particularly to the poets from among the believers.